

Message Text

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41

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00

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EB-07 OMB-01 TRSE-00 SAJ-01 ACDA-07 SY-05 /093 W

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R 101751Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY LISBON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9490

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL OPORTO

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMCONSUL PONTA DELGADA

USMISSION NATO

DIA WASHDC

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LISBON 8526

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS: CAMPAIGN ENDING ON SOUR NOTE

SUMMARY: DESPITE SEVERAL INCIDENTS AT ELECTION RALLIES AND A BOMB-INDUCED WATER CUTOFF IN LISBON, THE FINAL DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN HAVE PRODUCED NO SURPRISES. END SUMMARY.

1. CAMPAIGN ENDING ON SOUR NOTE: THE CAMPAIGN FOR LOCAL ELECTIONS ON DEC 12 IN WINDING DOWN ON A SOUR NOTE. SEVERAL INCIDENTS OCCURRED AT RALLIES ON DEC 8. LEFTIST DEMONSTRATORS SOUGHT TO BREAK UP A CDS RALLY IN CAPARICA, ACROSS THE RIVER FROM LISBON; ANTI-PS DEMONSTRATORS SOUGHT TO DISRUPT SOCIALIST RALLIES IN SETUBAL AND COIMBRA. NO SERIOUS INJURIES WERE REPORTED. SPEAKING AT WIND-UP RALLIES IN LISBON DEC 8, BOTH SOARES AND CUNHAL EXUDED CONFIDENCE. SOARES SAID THE RESULTS WOULD ENSURE THREE AND A HALF MORE YEARS OF SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT.

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CUNHAL COUNTERED BY POINTING TO A SURGE OF POPULAR SUPPORT BEHIND

THE PCP-DOMINATED "PEOPLE UNITED" ELECTION FRONT. THE CDS AND PSD SPEAKERS, COUNTING UPON A SHIFT TO THE RIGHT, CONTINUED TO PRESS THEIR ATTACKS AGAINST THE SOCIALIST GOVERNMENT.

2. GOVERNMENT MOVES AGAINST PCP: FACED WITH THE REFUSAL OF PCP-DOMINATED RURAL WORKERS IN PORTALEGRE TO RETURN A COOPERATIVE TO ITS FORMER OPERATORS, THE GOVERNMENT ON DEC 9 SENT IN THE REPUBLICAN NATIONAL GUARD. BY DAY'S END, THE SITUATION WAS STABILIZED WITH 100 GUARDSMEN AND THEIR RIOT VEHICLES REMAINING ON THE SCENE. IN A PARALLEL MOVE, MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE BARRETO, CLOSED DOWN THE AGRARIAN REFORM CENTER IN PORTALEGRE PENDING REORGANIZATION. THE ACTION IS THE FIRST STEP IN THE ANNOUNCED HOUSECLEANING OF THE MINISTRY. CUNHAL, SPEAKING AT A RALLY ELSEWHERE IN PORTALEGRE THE SAME DAY, LASHED OUT AT THE LATEST ACTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE CHARGED THE GOP WITH ATTEMPTING TO ROLL BACK THE REVOLUTION AND TO DESTROY AGRARIAN REFORM. COMMUNIST MOUTHPIECE, "O DIARIO," IN ITS LEAD EDITORIAL DEC 10, ECHOED CUNHAL IN REFERRING TO BARRETO'S TOUGH DEC 8 POLICY ADDRESS AS A "FACIST COMMUNICATION" LOOKING FOR VOTES ON THE RIGHT. BOTH CUNHAL AND "O DIARIO" CHARGED THE AUTHORITIES WITH COMPLICITY IN ALLOWING THE ULTRA-LEFT POPULAR POWER GROUPS (GDUP) TO STAGE A RALLY IN BEJA DEC 11 DESPITE A CLEAR PROHIBITION AGAINST SUCH MEETINGS ON THE EVE OF THE ELECTIONS.

3. LISBON'S WATER CUT OFF: A BOMB EXPLOSION IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF DEC 9 NEAR LISBON'S MAIN AQUADUCT LEFT MOST OF THE CITY WITHOUT WATER. SERVICE IS NOT EXPECTED TO BE RESTORED FOR SEVERAL DAYS. NO ONE HAS SO FAR CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ACT.

4. COMMENT: DESPITE THE UNWELCOME INCIDENTS, THE LAST DAYS OF THE CAMPAIGN HAVE PRODUCED NO SURPRISES. BARRETO'S TOUGH SPEECH AND THE GOVERNMENT'S FORCEFUL ACTION IN PORTALEGRE SHOULD HELP THE SOCIALISTS AT THE POLLS, PARTICULARLY IN THE NORTH. THE LATEST BOMBING IN LISBON AND THE WATER CUTOFF ARE, HOWEVER, A REMINDER TO THE ELECTORATE THAT SOARES'S PLEDGE TO PUT AN END TO TERRORISM HAS NOT BEEN FULFILLED.

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